

REMARKS

Claims 1-10, 12-16, 24, 25, and 30-43 are pending in this application.

Claims 17-22 and 26-29 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter; their rejections will not be discussed herein, although Applicant does not concede the propriety thereof. Claim 31 has been amended; no change in scope of Claim 31 is either intended or believed to be affected by the change made. Claims 1, 2, 7-10, 12-15, 24, 25, and 30-43 are in independent form.

Applicants note with appreciation the allowance of Claims 1-10, 12-16, 24, 25, and 30-43.

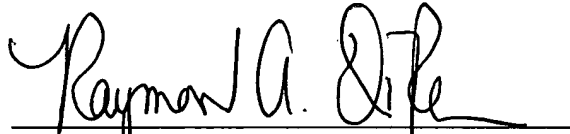
The Office Action asserts that no certified copy of the Japanese priority document has been received. However, a certified copy of the priority document was filed in the parent of this application, Application No. 09/557,316, and was received by the Patent and Trademark Office on August 21, 2000, as evidenced by the enclosed PAIR printout. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that a certified copy of the priority document has been filed, and requests acknowledgment thereof.

An Information Disclosure Statement and a corresponding Form PTO-1449 were filed on August 28, 2003. Although the Examiner has kindly returned a copy of the Form PTO-1449 filed with that Information Disclosure Statement, the Examiner did not initial the Anan et al. reference listed thereon. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to return a copy of the Form PTO-1449, initialed to indicate that the Anan et al. reference cited thereon was considered.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all of the pending claims being allowed, Applicant respectfully requests early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Raymond A. DiPerna", written over a horizontal line.

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